

Research Brief

Chinese University Students' Perceptions and Practices of Digital Citizenship:

A Mixed Methods Study

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Introduction

This thesis study aims to explore digital citizenship in the Chinese context, specifically focusing on the Chinese university students' interpretations and practices. Additionally, this research seeks to identify and examine the factors that significantly impact students' digital citizenship. The findings of this research could shed light on knowledge of digital citizenship in non-western social contexts. Also, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of Chinese university students' practices of digital citizenship, offering valuable insights into digital citizenship education.

Key Issues and Significant Findings

The purpose of this research was to address these gaps through investigating Chinese university students' perceptions and practices of digital citizenship and factors affecting digital citizenship. This research employed an exploratory sequential mixed method research design.

The qualitative findings revealed:

- ▶ The interviewed Chinese university students regarded digital citizenship as a comprehensive and multidimensional concept which could be interpreted from the perspectives of digital literacy skills, digital responsibility, digital morality, digital civic participation, and digital rights.
- ▶ In relation to their practices of digital citizenship, the interview findings suggested that the students behaved according to their beliefs, for example being familiar with digital literacy skills and behaving morally online, while they demonstrated a low level of passion for digital civic participation.

In general, the quantitative findings were consistent with the qualitative outcomes.

- ▶ The statistical results revealed five elements contributing to Chinese university students' interpretations of digital citizenship, with digital patriotism being a sole element and digital responsibility and morality merged into one element.

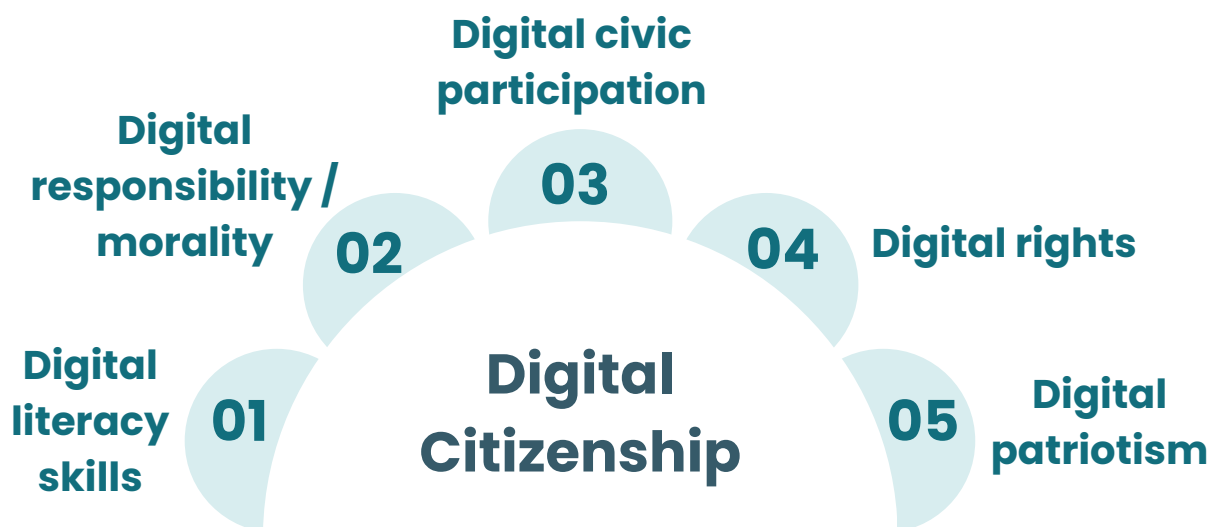


Figure 1: Chinese university students' perception of digital citizenship

- ▶ The Chinese university students' digital citizenship practices contained six elements, with digital rights split into two elements: protecting personal rights and respecting others' rights.



Figure 2: Chinese university students' practices of digital citizenship

- ▶ Most of the examined personal (ICT self-efficacy, and political efficacy) and environmental (school educational support, parental involvement, peer involvement) determinants had statistically significant positive relationships with the students' perceptions and practices of digital citizenship.

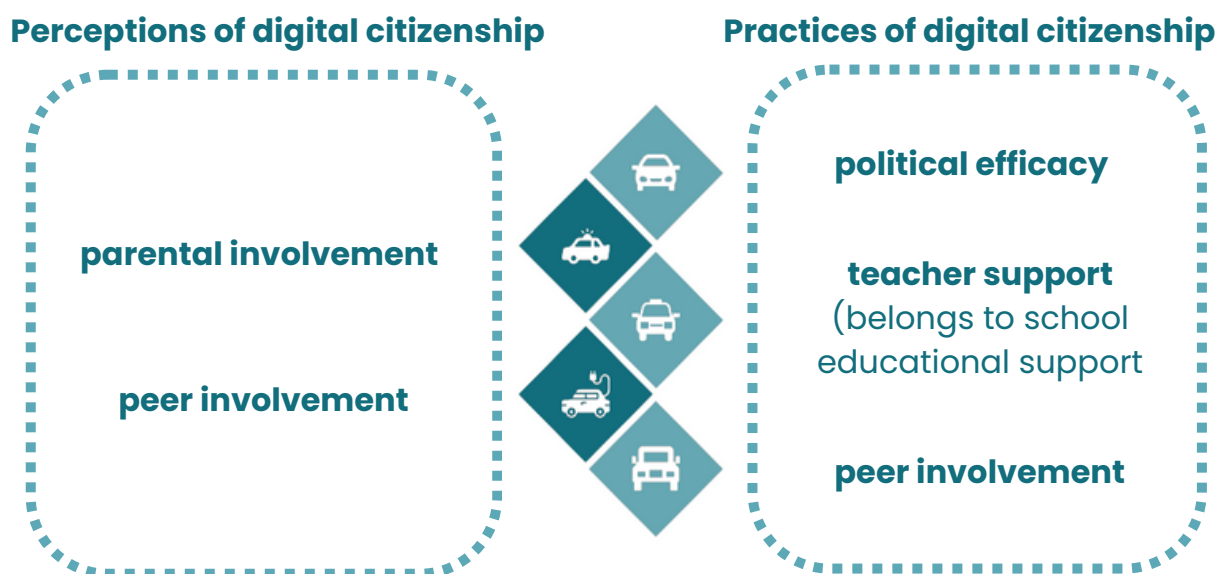


Figure 3: Personal and environmental determinants of Chinese university students' perceptions and practices of digital citizenship (medium-to-large effect)

Recommendation and Implication

This research holds several significant implications.

Within the research field

- ▶ This research provides valuable insights and references on digital citizenship within a non-western social context.
- ▶ Offering a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding this concept.
- ▶ Additionally, the development of an instrument to measure individuals' perceptions and practices of digital citizenship contributes to the existing tools available to researchers in this field.

Practical implications

- ▶ For policymakers, they can utilize these findings to identify the existing gap between what kinds of digital citizens the country needs and what kinds of digital citizens we currently have. By doing so, policymakers can reflect on the current digital surroundings and education of digital citizenship, enabling them to identify potential drawbacks and launch relevant policies or reforms to address these issues.
- ▶ For educators, they can use the research findings to identify any gaps that may exist between what is being taught and what students are actually learning regarding digital citizenship. Additionally, by understanding the factors that positively predict digital citizenship, educators can reflect on how to effectively engage different stakeholders to facilitate the cultivation of digital citizens in the digital era.

Main Stakeholders and **Engagement with Them**

This study investigated the relationship between school educational support, parental involvement, peer involvement, and university students' perceptions and practices of digital citizenship.


- ▶ The results suggest that parental involvement and peer involvement were the only ones having medium-to-large effects of students' perceptions of digital citizenship.
- ▶ Teacher support (belongs to school educational support) and peer involvement were found to have a medium-to-large effect on student practices of digital citizenship.

Based on these findings, this research suggests that different stakeholders like school, parents and peers should collaborate to facilitate the cultivation of digital citizens in China.



For More Information

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